

Heber council mulls airport proposal

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HEBER CITY — The Heber City Council is considering a proposal by the airport's fixed-base operator, Lee Rowser, to remodel the terminal building.

According to Rowser it would cost about \$150,000 to replace the building, while renovations would only cost \$40,000 to \$50,000.

Rowser told the council last week the terminal building is "an embarrassment" and the only "eyesore" left, now that new hangars have been built and the runway has been repaved and is being lengthened.

After the renovation the building would look new, inside and out, Rowser said. He said he'd like to complete the project before fall and he expects the

building to be able to meet the needs of the airport for at least the next 20 years.

He proposes to stucco the exterior with a Swiss motif similar to the new Visitors Center on Main Street, including shutters on the windows. The interior would be gutted except for the two restrooms, but they would be completely remodeled with new fixtures. A new forced air heating system would be installed and the electrical system would be replaced. A pilot lounge, flight planning room, two small instructor offices and three other offices for accounting and administration would replace the existing hangar and two offices.

Since the city can't afford to pay for the project, Rowser said his company, High Valley Avia-

tion, would take the responsibility. Some contractors have agreed to trade their work for services he can provide, he said, reducing his financial burden.

In return for his investment in the city's facility, Rowser asked the city to reduce his rent to \$10 per year for the next 20 years and to renew his rental agreement for an additional 20 years, with the same terms as the present agreement. Beginning next January, Rowser will be paying \$2,000 per year on his present lease, which has about 19 years left.

The councilmen said they would study Rowser's proposal and get together with him to discuss the details before making a decision.

Heber City Trying To Get FAA Money To Finish Airport Runway

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Uintah Engineering expected problems with extending the Heber City Airport runway across the old Wasatch County landfill, but now that the possibility has become a reality, it appears the Federal Aviation Administration may not provide the additional \$100,000 it cost to correct the problem.

About \$900,000 has been spent so far on airport improvements and lengthening the runway, 95 percent of which has been paid by the FAA from aviation gas taxes. The city is providing a 2.5 percent match and the State Aviation Administration is funding the balance.

Mayor Scott Wright said the FAA usually allows a 15 percent cushion in funding projects in case of problems like this one. That would mean about \$135,000 still should be available. However, he said the FAA has not responded to requests for the additional money and he has heard rumors that the agency is out of money.

He said when the project was bid last fall, the property hadn't all been acquired and the engineers didn't have as much access to the runway right of way as they would have liked. Therefore they didn't know for sure what problems they might discover in the area, particularly at the landfill, until excavation

began during the spring. Wright said the assortment of material in the landfill, much of it organic, doesn't provide a solid enough base for the runway. Therefore, to meet the engineers' specifications, a higher grade of material than just fill dirt had to be used to properly "bridge" the pit.

Wright said the engineers notified the FAA early in June that the additional money was needed, but received no response until about a week ago when they were told the agency didn't have the \$100,000. He and Councilman Keith Jacobson, who is in charge of the airport, said they are still trying to get the money and have several possible solutions they are pursuing. But they said Monday that they would rather wait until they have some kind of agreement before releasing any details.

However, Wright said he hopes the engineers can justify the over-run and get the money from the FAA. He said they must convince the agency, "This is why we did it. If we did it the way you think we should have done it, five years down the road you're going to have a mushy runway."

Jacobson said the FAA wanted the dirt that was removed when the runway was excavated to be used

to fill the garbage pit, and the road base material just laid over the top. However, he said the engineers wanted to be sure the runway was well designed and wouldn't break up in five to ten years.

He recalled that Councilman Wayne Clegg once asked the engineers, "Can you get a decent runway across that landfill?" and the engineers answered that they could. Jacobson said it may just be a matter of judgment, but the engineers are not satisfied with the FAA's assessment and solution. He pointed out that Uintah's reputation is at stake and the engineers don't want it ruined by a project that breaks up because it wasn't properly constructed.

He added that he has been particularly pleased with Uintah's performance. He said one of the company's engineers has been on the site every day and watched every phase of construction, to be sure everything meets specifications. He said some engineering companies only spot check their projects and can't be sure of what goes on when they aren't there.

He said even if the runway has to remain as it is through the winter, it is far enough along, and solid enough that there wouldn't be any significant weather damage.



What's happening with the Heber City Airport improvement project these days? Nothing. The work has been at a halt for more than a week because the Federal Aviation Administration is balking at a \$100,000 cost over-run, which the engineers warned could happen because of conditions at the old Wasatch County dump site.



Airport Runway Completed

Finally! The runway extension at the Heber City Airport was completed last Saturday. Now small jets can fly in and out of Heber City in the summer time as well as during the winter.

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